



Nebraska Communication Plan for HCBS Medicaid Waiver Initiative

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Introduction to HCBS Medicaid Waiver Initiative

Two Home and Community Based (HCBS) Medicaid Waivers, Developmental Disabilities (DD) Adult Day and DD Adult Comprehensive, expired December 31, 2015. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) received a 90-day extension of authority from federal partners at Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS). In consultation with partners in Medicaid and Long Term Care (MLTC) and CMS, the DDD director decided to “un-submit” the two adult waiver renewal applications and develop new waiver renewals for submission to CMS.

In an effort to align with the governor’s expectation that services offered are customer-friendly, streamlined and fiscally efficient, all three Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers will be reviewed. In addition to the aforementioned DD Adult Day, DD Adult Comprehensive, DDD administers a DD Children’s waiver. This seamless approach to waiver delivery should allow those utilizing waiver services to better understand and access needed services.

One goal for re-developing waiver applications is to engage external stakeholders as well as Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) employees in a collaborative work process to ensure new waivers reflect national best practice in supporting people served by DDD. The division is doing this by having workgroups composed of staff and stakeholders addressing the key areas of the HCBS waiver application.

Initiative Objectives

Objectives for the Medicaid waiver initiative are reliant on effective and frequent communication. These include:

1. To stabilize waivers to be implemented January 1, 2017
2. To redesign service systems that work together
 - a. Change of waivers will expand to new regulations, policies, etc
 - b. Focus will shift to redesign in 2017
3. To engage internal and external shareholders, thereby increasing public input
4. To utilize a variety of communication methods to maximize reach of information

Waiver Stabilization

The State of Nebraska will implement new HCBS waivers January 1, 2017. Everyone currently receiving services under a HCBS waiver will continue to receive waiver services to meet their needs. Between October and December 2016, DHHS will develop training curriculum for waiver rollout, identify lead trainers, and offer said training in public forums and webinars to ensure a seamless transition to the new waivers.

Identified Target Audience

The divisions have determined who is affected and how to best reach them. Communication occurs with these stakeholders in mind with the intent to engage. The following were identified:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals currently receiving waiver services
- Families of individuals with disabilities
- Guardians
- Advocates
- Legislature
- DHHS employees
- Providers

- General public

Communication Outreach & Engagement

“Together we’re better!”

As Courtney Phillips, chief executive officer of the Nebraska DHHS, says, “Together we’re better!” We want to focus on quality customer services designed by individual in services, families, guardians, neighbors, friends, advocates, and providers.

Flyers

DDD developed flyers for each of the identified workgroups. These flyers contained the following information:

- Workgroup name
- Meeting locations
- Dates and times of meetings
- Call-in or web-based option
- Contact information to join workgroup

Flyers were distributed:

- During grassroots efforts in person
- Via initial and subsequent email blasts
- Posting at Beatrice State Developmental Center in reception areas and bulletin boards
- Through secondhand distribution
 - Forwarding emails
 - Posting in locations

Updates made to flyers as workgroups changed meeting information.

Posters

The public comment phase may be advertised with posters created by individuals receiving waiver services. Any posters will feature forum information, logos and the slogan “Together We’re Better!”

Email Blasts

DHHS will engage in email blasts to engage stakeholders. Emails originate from division director and the communication coordinator. Organizations and individuals receiving email are asked to help spread our message to those with which they are associated.

Newspaper and Other Publication

Newspapers Statewide

As appropriate, DDD will consult with CLS about the possibility of news releases to distribute statewide. CLS will provide guidance, communication coordinator will draft, DDD and MLTC directors will approve, and CLS will distribute news release.

If CLS advises that the press will likely not pick up the release, communication coordinator and CLS will discuss other possible opportunities for press release opportunities.

DDD Technical Assistance E-Newsletter

The first e-newsletter is expected be published in May or June. The target audience is specialized DD providers, state employees, individuals, families/guardians, and others who subscribe. Communication Coordinator will draft a piece for this publication, DDD director will approve, and technical assistance manager will distribute.

Other Publications

DDD will work with CLS to identify other publications that may take an interest and feature an article. Possible opportunities:

- NASDDDS Publications: Community Services Reporter, Federal News Briefs, State News Briefs
- HCBS clearinghouse newsroom

Workgroup Led Outreach

There are two co-facilitators, or workgroup leads, for each workgroup. These leads are encouraged to do additional targeted outreach to ensure representative from all interested parties. As an example, we are focus on the participation of individuals in services and we are encouraging DDD service coordinators, providers, ARC, family advocacy groups and others to reach out and encourage participation.

Questions & Comments

The Division created an email mailbox for people to submit questions regarding the HCBS Medicaid waiver initiative. The email address is DHHS.DDWaiverQuestions@nebraska.gov. The DHHS DDD homepage has a link for questions about the Medicaid Initiative. This is also on the intranet for employees. Each Medicaid waiver initiative page has the email clearly displayed. All workgroup leads are encouraged to share the availability of this email option at workgroup meetings.

Workgroup leads also have index cards for workgroup participants to write questions when meeting. People are encouraged to write questions and comments for the workgroup they are in, as well as for other workgroups. Workgroup leads collect the cards and they follow the same response plan as questions and comments that are emailed.

Workgroup leads will email the person who presented the question or comment with approved response. communication coordinator and CLS will be copied on the response.

There will be a Q&A section on the Medicaid waiver initiative main page. Weekly, the communication coordinator will post questions and answers online by category.

Online Presence and Engagement

DDD Homepage

The DDD homepage has a section titled “Medicaid Initiative,” http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities/Pages/developmental_disabilities_index.aspx, directly beneath the director’s picture and information.

Communication coordinator maintains the DDD webpages. Director or deputy director direct all changes made to the website. DHHS webmaster approves changes before they are live on the public site.

Medicaid Waiver Initiative Pages

The DDD communication coordinator worked with DHHS webmasters to develop a comprehensive and easy to use public website specific to the Medicaid waiver initiative. The website is located under the Division of MLTC, as Medicaid is the overseeing agency for the waivers. The website includes two components:

- **Main Page:** There are links to the Medicaid waiver initiative main page from the DDD homepage, MLTC homepage, and other pages.

This main page:

- Explains that the Medicaid waiver initiative is a joint effort between the divisions of DDD and MLTC
 - Gives a brief history
 - Outlines goals and steps the divisions is taking to align waivers
 - Has a table listing workgroup names, picture icons, and descriptions. The group names and icons are links to individual pages for each workgroup.
 - Includes link to email questions and comments (DHHS.DDWaiverQuestions@nebraska.gov)
 - Includes Q&A section
 - Will be used to track how many people are viewing and where they are clicking
- **Workgroup pages:** The Medicaid Waiver Initiative main page has links to these pages as described above.

Each workgroup has its own page:

- Workgroup pages have the workgroup description
- Email link for questions and comments is provided
- Page have sections for each meeting date
 - PDFs are posted prior to meetings: agendas, handouts, and PowerPoints
 - Minutes are posted as PDFs after meetings
- Workgroup pages have the option to subscribe
 - After the kickoff meeting, workgroup members were subscribed
 - Leads encourage workgroup members to subscribe
 - Any interested person can subscribe
 - When a page is updated, subscribers receive an email alert
 - CLS maintains subscriptions and can get tracking information to DDD

Communication coordinator maintains Medicaid waiver initiative webpages. DDD director or deputy director approves all posted documents. DHHS webmaster approves changes before they are live on public site. Maintenance of site includes:

- Uploading and linking documents for workgroups
- Updating Q&A section
- Every two weeks, tracking how many people access website.

Links to Medicaid Waiver Initiative Page

The Division asked service providers and other organizations if they would include links to the Medicaid waiver initiative main page on their webpages.

Intranet for DHHS Employees

DHHS maintains an internal website, the intranet, for employees of the department. Organized like the public website, each division has a link to access a homepage with division specific information. DDD posted Medicaid waiver initiative

information and flyers as soon as they became available. Beneath posted flyers is a button to email questions or comments pertaining to the Medicaid waiver initiative.

Communication coordinator maintains DDD intranet. DDD director or deputy director directs changes made.

Workgroups

As stated, one goal for developing waiver applications is to engage stakeholders and DHHS employees in a shared work process to ensure new waivers reflect national best practice in supporting people served by DDD and MLTC.

Workgroup Topics

The Divisions is engaging stakeholders by having workgroups composed of internal and external stakeholders addressing the key areas of the application, including, but not limited to:

- **Application & Eligibility:** This workgroup is reviewing how people apply for DD services and how decisions are made regarding eligibility for both DD services and waiver services.
- **Health & Safety:** This workgroup is reviewing health care, emergency safety restrictions, and other safety concerns. The group is working on actual practice matching written protocol. They are also working on prioritizing needs.
- **Person-Centered Planning:** This workgroup is reviewing and improving tools used to ensure people are the focus of services. People have valuable gifts, contribute to the community, and have relationships.
- **Prioritization & Wait List:** This workgroup is looking at the function of the DDD Registry of Unmet Needs, or "waitlist." They are identifying who should have reserved capacity in the waivers.
- **Provider Enrollment:** This workgroup is developing a provider enrollment process that allows new and qualified providers to offer services for DD. The group is discussing what support is needed for new providers be successful.
- **Quality Improvement:** This workgroup is considering the quality assurance currently used and identifying gaps that need to be addressed. They are developing performance measures to gauge improvement.
- **Service Definitions:** This workgroup is defining individual services, using CMS guidelines. The group will ensure a seamless transition to unbundled services.

Workgroup Communication

Workgroups have co-facilitators, or leads, who are the primary communicators for relaying information specific to the workgroup to members of the workgroup. As such, they:

- Send reminder email to group the week before meeting; this may be combined with follow up email
- Encourage members to Subscribe to workgroup page online
- Create PowerPoints and other handouts as applicable to their workgroup
- Has sign in sheet and lists people attending remotely
- Keep minutes during workgroup meetings
- Send the communication coordinator any approved information that needs to be uploaded to the website for their workgroup.

*Prior to publishing or emailing, minutes should be reviewed by DDD deputy director.

The communication coordinator:

- Uploads all workgroup handouts online to the workgroup's page prior to meeting
- Updates contact information upon receiving sign in sheets

- Emails leads updated contact information after meetings, or weekly if information changes

Workgroup Membership

Workgroup participants include both internal and external stakeholders. People interested in participating in workgroups were asked to sign up and many did. Sign in sheets are used at workgroup meetings to gather email addresses and information on attendance. People may attend workgroups in person; however, all workgroups also have an option for either call-in or web-based participation.

The communication coordinator maintains workgroup membership and attendance. Monthly, in the week prior to stakeholder meeting, workgroup membership is analyzed to determine where additional outreach may be needed. Attendance can be in person, call-in, or web-based participation.

Workgroup analysis is sent to workgroup leads and administration by the Wednesday before the monthly stakeholder meeting. Leads decide if there are people they need reach out to and develop a plan to do so. Administration may direct additional outreach.

Stakeholder Meetings

Monthly stakeholder meetings are open to the public. For the duration of the Medicaid waiver initiative, stakeholder meetings will provide status updates on DDD activities and waiver strategy. The agenda will include:

1. DHHS Division updates from DD, MLTC, CFS and BH.
2. Workgroup updates from leads.

Administrative assistant to director will:

- Prepare agenda and send to communication coordinator to post online prior to meeting
- Keep minutes and send to communication coordinator to post online after meeting

Communication coordinator will:

- Upload any handouts online, including agenda and minutes
- Updated contact information

Statewide Training

DHHS will conduct statewide trainings on new waivers, regulations and processes. Trainings will focus on ensuring a seamless transition to the new waivers. Trainings will be offered by DDD and MLTC content experts in public forums throughout the state and will also be available via webinar as well as saved on the waiver website for those not able to attend.

Sample topics include but are not limited to:

- The federal HCBS waiver regulations and the opportunity to go from compliance to authentic community membership for people with DD
- Revised service definitions and concomitant rates
- Roles and responsibilities of service coordinators and providers
- Updates on provider billing
- New procedures for annual level of care redeterminations
- Health and welfare requirements

- Continuous quality improvement, including an explanation of the waiver performance measures and their applicability to programmatic management
- Provider enrollment improvements
- Managing the DD Wait List Registry

Public Comment Opportunities

Subsequent to the drafting, but prior to the submission of waivers, public comments will be sought. Statewide forums will be held for stakeholder input on HCBS Medicaid Waivers and proposed regulations.

MLTC public comment will occur during eight in-person meetings held across the state and two webinars.

DDD public comment forums will be held across the state in September. These will be advertised via email blasts, on DHHS websites, public notices and with posters.

Public Input Survey

DHHS will conduct three surveys to gauge public response to the HCBS Medicaid Waiver Initiative. These will be conducted online using Survey Monkey. Communication coordinator will create the survey, with input from workgroup leads and DHHS consultant; DDD director will approve; communication coordinator and directors will distribute; communication coordinator will analyze.

The first two surveys will be conducted in April and August regarding website content and workgroups. Analysis of data collected will be used to make any changes to online communication or workgroup practice.

The second survey will be will be conducted in October regarding statewide public comment meetings.